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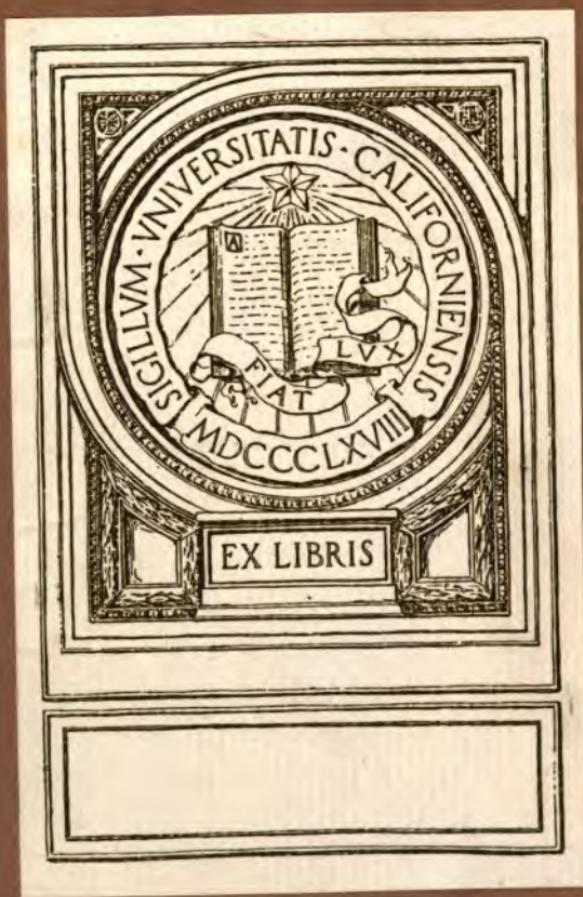
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COMPLETE METHOD

of

PYRAMID BUILDING

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

BY

JOSEPH PASKOVSKÝ

II

TRANSLATION BY DR. R. JIČÍNSKÝ
and HENRY ŠMÍDL

CHICAGO, ILL.
1919

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C. R. H.



JOSEPH PASKOVSKY
CHIEF OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF BOHEMIAN
"SOKOL" SOCIETIES

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA



INTRODUCTION



HIS book was written, because there is absolutely nothing of its kind in technical literature; neither has there been a similar work published, which, really would be a complete and suitable manual for our colleagues, the teachers and instructors in this branch of physical education.

I sincerely hope that the teachers and instructors in the schools, or even of smaller organizations, where they have not enough apparatus in their gymnasiums at their disposal, will gladly accept this book, which gives them rich material for regular work in classes, as well as for public exhibition programs and various celebrations.

All the groups and pyramids, as you find them in this book, were formed, assembled and executed by the active members of the gymnastic association of Bohemian Sokols, the "Sokol Chicago", where I had at my disposal a large number of the best gymnasts and thus had an opportunity to build the most difficult groups and pyramids with most beautiful statuesque posing, as you find them on the different pages of this book.

The photographing process was executed by an amateur, a member of the "Sokol Chicago" Jos.

TO VITALI
AMERICAN

Sliva, and the half-tone illustrations were made by the well known firm Franklin Engraving Co., 720-734 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

I would like to introduce more of the possibilities of the formation and building of groups and pyramids into this work, but the expense of illustrations was such, that I had to limit myself only to the most necessary figures of fundamental character, so that every instructor, teacher and active leader may have the best at hand for his own creative impulses of selections.

I wish that this little book may help those, for whom it is specially designed, that is our instructors, teachers, active members and others.

Joseph Paskovsky.



GROUP AND PYRAMID.

THE exercises in the grouping, assembling, building and forming of pyramids with statuesque posing, are the most interesting in our system of gymnastics, but the work itself is not developed in gymnasiums as far as it should be.

The art of grouping the human bodies in a whole as a class exercise, is not new; it was well known to the Assyrians and the people of the Levant who distinguished themselves in acrobatics, fencing and other exercises of the body. In old Venice too, homage was done to this class of gymnastics and proofs are in existence that the families of Castellans and of their enemies the Niccollets settled their misunderstandings not with barbarian combats, but rather with development of groups and formation and building of pyramids.

Their agility was wonderful in that respect, and they assembled sometimes more than thirty performing gymnasts in groups, pyramids and tableau, founded on the most beautiful species of art and architecture. And even to-day we may meet individual groups of Arabs, Japanese and Chinese who arouse us with wonder and appreciation, as they are performing their groups and pyramids, gaining the applause of the public. The groups of these professionals have usually the sign of specialty, that the whole weight of ten, twelve or more members being on the shoulders of one man.

The pyramids offer almost an unlimited field for every instructor of creative mind, and the fact,

TO WHICH AMERICAN

that they enable also the less proficient to participate in their building, makes them very attractive to all the members of our gymnastic classes.

These exercises are performed: without the apparatus, with the apparatus or on the apparatus, and either at the gymnasium or in the open air, anywhere without special arrangements and preparations. In a comparatively short time the actives will learn their parts, the procedure of cultivation looks good, rich and is effective even with less conscious efforts. Not only does it give us in the regular hours of our class work the most entertaining material of considerable educational value, useful and practical, but the various groups and pyramids could be used with success for the finale or conclusion of public exhibitions, or we may connect the same with simple free exercises, or still more enrich our programs at many occasions, celebrations, socials, academies, festivals etc., especially if proper care is taken in the selection of the poses and their correct imitation.



DIVISION OF GROUPS AND CLASSIFICATIONS.

THE exercises in assembling, forming and building of groups and pyramids are divided into three main classes, that is:

1. Groups simple—without apparatus.
2. Groups with apparatus.
3. Groups on the apparatus.

Groups and pyramids simple or without apparatus are those in which we employ human bodies only, without any other help. This class of activity is the most accessible and we may state, the most popular. It may be used, when thoroughly mastered, at any time and everywhere without special preparations.

Groups with apparatus are similar to the groups and pyramids of simple character. In these we may employ long poles and wands. The advantage of these we see mainly in much stronger construction and also in the possibility of inserting in their structure more pendant and stationary positions, as we see them on different apparatus.

Pyramids on the apparatus are those, in which we use all kinds of apparatus employed at our gymnasiums, namely parallel bars, horse, buck, table, horizontal bar, suspended rings, ladders free or fixed, climbing poles, balance board, chairs etc.

We may build and construct the groups or pyramids on one, two or more pieces of apparatus of the same sort, or of different kind, this depending more on the inventive and creative power of the instructor himself. These groups and exercises give us also plenty of material, which can not be exhausted so soon and with strong members we may produce wonderfull results.

The first two main divisions of groups and pyramids we have to divide again into three subordinate classes, that is:

- a) Groups and pyramids flat.
- b) Groups and pyramids conical.
- c) Groups and pyramids movable.

Class 3. does not include the subordinate class
c) i. e. movable pyramids, because these are built
on fixed apparatus.

Flat groups and pyramids which are the most simple in working order may be built even with a small number of members and are used most often. They may be employed with success especially there, where the public is in front of the stage, high wall etc. There the foundation line is usually in the form of straight line (1) or oval (2).

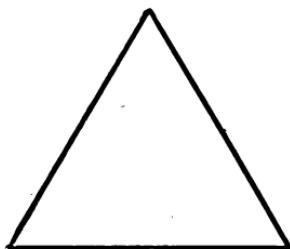


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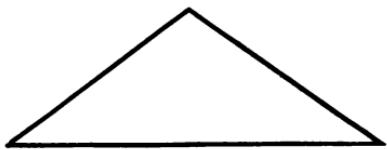


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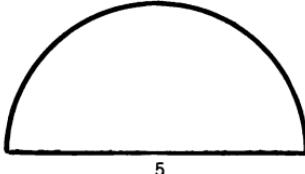
These groups or pyramids we assemble, build and form in a majority of cases in the form of a triangle (3) (4) or oval (5) and also a square (6), but seldom have to use a different figure and that only in exercise of this branch on the apparatus.



3



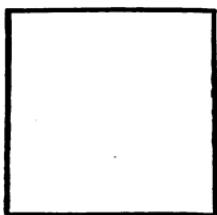
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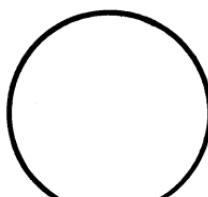
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Conical groups and pyramids are less customary, because the actual work requires a larger number and more agile participants, than in a flat one. But they may be used with advantage at open places and on specially constructed stages, being then more effective.

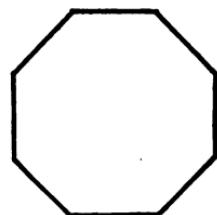
As to the fundamental line we accept usually in these groups a triangle 3., square 6., a ring 7., or any other kind of angle 8.



6

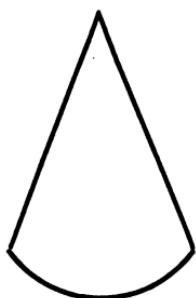


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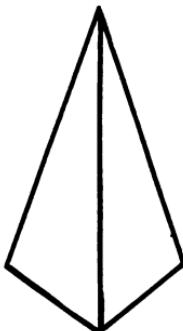


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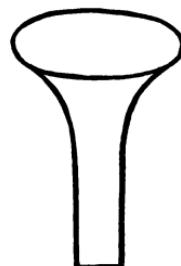
These groups or pyramids are usually built in the form of a cone 9., pyramid 10., or in case apparatus is employed, as fixed ladders for instance, in the form of a rose 11.



9



10



11

Groups movable are mostly of entertaining and amusing character. In the construction of those it is important to have in view always the firmness of their foundations and the security of combination, so that with the movement of the men in stepping here and there no one would be injured, or the picture in its detail scattered.

These movable pyramids we may divide again into two classes, i. e.

1. Groups or pyramids moving around their own axis, i. e. in a circle.
2. Groups or pyramids moving in one straight direction, or "walking pyramids".

Other subordinate classification of the groups and pyramids is as follows:

1. Complete rows.
2. Half rows.
3. Mixed.

Complete rows are created when the support of the higher row is done in a standing position on the shoulders of the lower row.

Half rows originate when the support of the higher row is lower than the shoulders.

Mixed rows, we have, when both the forms mentioned above are represented.

Therefore as we use as fundamental parts of standing positions or the supports, we may divide again the groups or pyramids in higher and lower ones.

If the whole group or pyramid is a combination by itself, we call the same a simple group. If it is assembled, built or constructed with and combined with other forms of groups, either similar, or larger and smaller in their composition, we call such a group or pyramid a complex group.



CONDITIONS NECESSARY IN CORRECT AND EXACT BUILDING OF GROUPS AND PYRAMIDS.

In these exercises and building of groups and pyramids we have to consider three very important points:

1. Correct and gradual development.
2. Firmness and security of construction.
3. General appearance and beauty.

For correct development it is necessary to ascertain first, what kind a group or pyramid the teacher or the instructor would like to have. And in the real construction of the same he has to form first the middle part of the group, which being the skeleton of the whole, receives then the sidings and if necessary the first frontal fill-ups.

The weight has to be divided in such a way that the weight of one man in upper row would be supported by two men of the lower rows.

If we are exercising more groups and pyramids, we should always begin with the most simple ones, going gradually to the complicated formations culminating with the last one of beauty and real composition of agility and balance.

Under construction we understand first the secure position of those men, forming fundamental part of the whole structure and also strong connections of the men in all the upper rows. Both procedures have to take place in such way that one

of the men would be to the other one a complete support, not allowing anyone in a weak position to receive the weight of others. Such a group or pyramid would not be strong enough to withstand any slight movement and simply may break down.

In many more difficult flat groups, we may help ourselves in such a way, that the actual building takes place near the wall of the place, the upper row of the actives having thus a better backing.

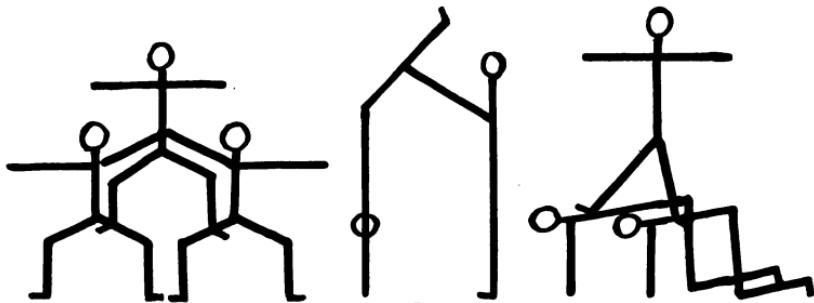
General appearance and beauty. With every exercise and exhibition, we have to take proper care that the movements themselves fully answer to the purpose of beauty, æsthetics and complete comeliness and that counts especially with the building of groups, pyramids and statuesque posing. We have to give all attention not only to the positions, but to the individual poses which have to be practiced most diligently to the most perfect type, and not executed carelessly. The bodies in straight and upright posture, heads raised, small of the back curved properly will make the groups twice as beautiful, than the execution of the work without care. Another demand in regard to comeliness of the groups is symmetry. Without it no grouping seems to be possible. And therefore in selection of the participants we should observe that for the same positions and poses on both sides, the men are selected of nearly the same development, form and built. Then from the æsthetic standpoint few things will bring out the beauty of body lines more satisfactorily than a fine physique in a correctly executed and well selected pose. (Globisch.)

Decorative border at the top

IN WHAT MANNER WE HAVE TO PROCEED IN EXECUTION AND PRACTICE OF THE GROUPS AND PYRAMIDS.

EVERY teacher of physical culture, or an instructor in gymnastic, whatever he may practice in actual active work or employ in class for demonstration, has to have his plan ready in advance. If he does not care to assemble, build or form a group or a pyramid according to the illustration or picture of these exercises, shown somewhere else, and would like to produce his own original work, he may simply draw his own plan in straight lines and come before his class fully prepared. If there is some correction or change necessary it can be made right during the practice, and there is absolutely no loss of time.

Such a plan will be sufficient as the guide in his hands to proceed easily and systematically. The groups and their formation are selected or produced according to the development of the participants who may be available.



Further, a very important point, leading to the most successful formation of groups and pyramids is the selection of the performing men. For the foundation it is urgent to select actives only of strong bodily construction, similar figure, and as far as it is possible, of high stature and good form; for the middle rows actives highly developed of agility, middle weight and for the upper rows especially agile and skillful members are chosen, light and careful. Right from the start in the selection of actives we have to take in consideration the main point of successful building of groups: the symmetry in choosing our participants for same position on both sides, or actives nearly of the same figure, form, stature and development.

If we are building groups or pyramids, composed of smaller ones, it is necessary first to begin with execution and drilling of individual parts and then step by step to come to the final grouping. If we proceed that way, much of unnecessary exertion and talking is saved. It is certainly of advantage in practicing the building of especially large groups and pyramids, to number all the participants and actives, just as well as the illustration of ours according to the plan of the work itself, and that way to gain a better review of action and the actual progress.

A very important step in practicing the exercises of building the groups and pyramids is to prevent any obstruction of the actives to each other by stopping aimless running around from place to place. We therefore assign to every member the position to be entered upon right from the beginning and his place, wherefrom he may get as soon as possible and by the shortest way and without obstruction to others to his fundamental, or first position. In dissolution or discontinuance the

first group, the first fundamental position at once has to be arranged for the second group, the performing actives changing their places according to their pose, grade and necessity, reaching in the shortest way and without obstacles the position assigned to them in the second group. With these transition periods, we may also combine special poses, statues or living symbolic pictures of old or modern athletic events, or from specially significant groups of modern statuary. But here, we have to bear in mind that the gymnastic value of the groups must not by any means suffer giving us the proper effect only with certain meaning, historical or otherwise.

Every group or pyramid, especially of larger and more complex grouping, it is well, if not imperative, to build in several counts or signals, not less than three. It is certainly possible, namely in exercising and building of smaller groups to start at one count or signal only, but we may risk such a procedure in a case of perfect condition of the actives trained and ready to obey the command with proper qualifications in cultivation of speed, strength, accuracy and agility. Slow, tardy walking up and down spoils the whole arrangement and effect.

If we are building a group on three different signals, we have to come at the first signal from the first position to the fundamental poses, that is, the actives forming the fundamental of the groups go to their assigned places, and those who have to climb into the upper rows have to be ready for rising. At the second signal they swing upwards, those who are assigned to places, and those who have to climb into, if necessary. At the third signal the members ending the grouping take their places on the sides, in the middle and the front as directed, finishing the whole figure in no time. If there are handstands, the

typical swings and balance exercises employed, those selected for this act take their places at the second signal and swing in position required at the third signal. All positions should be graceful and well balanced and not strained.

For handstands, in upper rows of our groupings only those actives are employed as fit and able who have good record in class work, being proficient in difficult movements and whose swings are executed directly on hands without push or vaulting or are of high standard of excellence as required to qualify for such work.

The discontinuance or cessation of groups in their individual form takes place on one signal, and in such a manner that the actives may quickly take up the new formation. First the actives of the upper rows have to jump down, then the lower ones have to part, or the groups are dissolved in reverse of the actual building of the same, that is from upper rows down. Otherwise it could easily happen, if someone of the participating actives of the lower row would abandon his place too soon, that the whole group might collapse and the uppers sustain dangerous injuries.

In the practical management of classes, teaching and exercising the groups, pyramids and statuesque posing on the stage we may arrange the building and grouping first and then let the curtain go up. When down, we may rapidly and smoothly prepare the second group and so on. This mode of action will be of advantage to us especially in arranging for heavy work of grouping and more complex groups for the building of which we need all kinds of help and different aid and support, belts, bands etc.

The most important point in the arrangement and introduction and building of gymnastic groups

and pyramids will be found certainly with the costume used and the actual "make up".

If we are performing groups and pyramids at a public exhibition or any other mass drills or tournaments, it is well to use our simple costumes or gymnastic uniforms.

On the other hand, if we are performing "evening socials", "academies", or similar celebrations, where building groups, pyramids or posing take place on the stage, we may without hesitation use a suitable costume answering to the original idea of the actual construction and the meaning of the grouping, which will then in its executions, dignity, refinement and presentation gain very much.

We may also use white suits, tights or white shirts, short trousers, pantaloons tightened at the knees, white stockings and slippers. If we have black background in such performance, the effect of the statues, groups and pyramids will be excellent. We may also use costumes of different colors, for example white and black, grooping the same in dainty pictures with most beautiful effects.

Many groups and pyramids especially those of conical form, which have to bring out a certain idea or the work of creative art, sculpture or architecture, may be imitated and practiced in exercises without of "making up", or any dress, employing only tight belts and supporting girths, the naked bodies giving us opportunity to demonstrate the most artistic features of the whole procedure. For such an occasion, however, we must select men of the best musculature, proper development and good form, considerable practice, good muscle, sense and control. Heart and soul should be in the pose and not merely the physique.

Although some people of peculiar tastes and most simple views might try their best to observe in such educational work something unbecoming and improper, I have to state that there is absolutely nothing immoral in seeing beautiful bodies of human beings; on the contrary we are helping thus to remove the old prejudices of different hypocrites and individuals and in acquiring confidence in our educational work are securing friends in all the circles of our people.

In arranging and building of such groups and pyramids we have to take certainly the light effects in consideration and stage the place accordingly. The background or curtain should be dark or black. The spotlight has to be sharp and concentrated, the electric lamps with reflectors, with suitable frames for changing colors, and producing the desired effects with Bengal light, magnesium etc., if necessary.

DIFFERENT "stunts", which in our gymnastic activities are placed under the head of "miscellaneous exercises", should form a part of every gymnastic program. By these exercises the agility is developed to a great extent and we are also gradually mastering control of our muscles, which is so necessary in keeping a balance and no member, taking part in pyramid building, should be without these necessary qualifications. I have selected for this work some of those so-called "stunts", which are especially helpful in pyramid building and which may be practiced either by individuals, or by the groups of two's or three's. These miscellaneous exercises are great source of amusement and as a rule are in great favor among the members of our gymnastic classes.

Some of the poses, taken from our calisthenic exercises, are utilized nearly in every pyramid and it is absolutely necessary to acquire perfect form in these exercises, before building of pyramids is attempted. For in more complex groupings it is well impossible, to pay attention to every individual and careless positions would mar the symmetry and beauty of our work.

These positions should be practiced diligently in classes so as to enable every member to master just as perfect form of executions as possible. The poses of individual participants in pyramids, vary in every pyramid and the more proficient the members become in these exercises the less difficulty we experience and the faultless poses will add greatly to the beauty of the structure. For this reason the instructor should insist on perfect execution of the most elementary movements in the calisthenic exercises.

PREPARATORY EXERCISES.

Preparatory Exercises



**Lunging right (Lt)
sideward with
arms sideward**

Arch Stand on the floor



**Lunging right (Lt) for-
ward with arms ob-
liquely foreupward**

for Individual Members

Head Stand



Support Lying Frontways

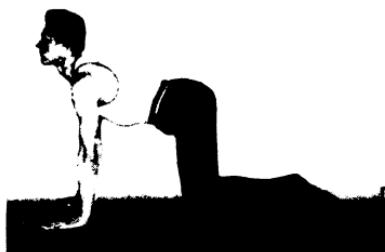


Hand Stand





Stride Stand with hands
on hips



Support Kneeling Front-
ways (on all four)

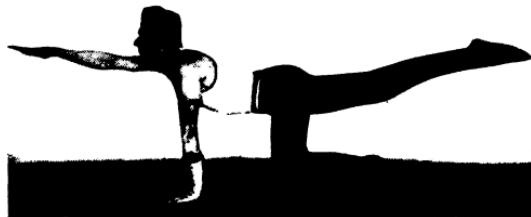


Balance Stand frontways right (Lt), arms foreupward,
palms down

Kneeling left (Rt), arms upward



**Trunk lowered forward,
arms upward, palms
down**



**Support Kneeling on right (Lt), knee and left (Rt)
arm, with opposite arm and leg extended**

Preparatory Exercises



Shoulder Stand, supported by knees and hands of No. 2 lying



Lever, with scissor hold on body of No. 2, supported by thighs and hands of No. 2



Head Stand supported by knees and hands of No. 2 lying

for Two Members

Head Stand on back of
No. 2 in support kneeling



Support kneeling,
with opposite arm
and leg extended,
on shoulder and
wrist of No. 2
standing

Hand Stand on chest of
No. 2, and supported by
hands of No. 2 lying



Preparatory Exercises



Pyramid of two members, to fill out centers



Lever on shoulders with scissor hold on neck of No. 2, supported by hands and shoulders of No. 2



Balance support on hands of No. 2, lying with arms forward

for Two Members

Pyramid of two members, to fill out centers



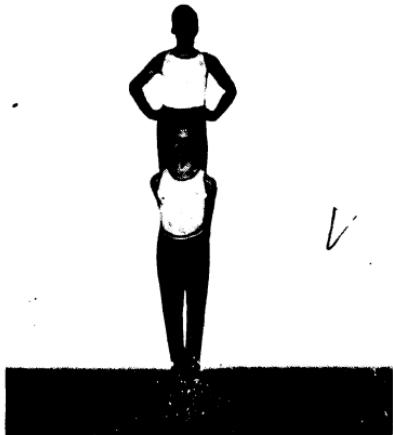
Pyramid of two members, to fill out sides



Shoulder Stand on soles of No. 2, lying



Preparatory Exercises



Stand on hands of No. 2.
Hands clasped in rear.



Support lying
Frontways on
knees & hands
of No. 2 lying.



Hand Stand on thigh, supported
by hands of No. 2 kneeling.

for two members

Chest Stand, supported
by chest and hands of
No. 2 standing.



Shoulder Stand on thighs
of No. 2 in support lying
rearways, knee flexed.



Hand Stand on back of
No. 2 in support
kneeling.



Preparatory Exercises



**Head Stand on head of No. 2,
supported by hands.**



**Lever on hands of No. 2
with arms upward.**



**Hand Stand on back of No. 2 in a
lunge position, trunk lowered
forward, hands on floor.**

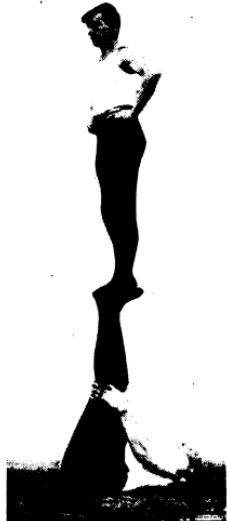
for two members

**Stand on shoulders of No. 2
supported by hands.**



**Balance support on hands of No. 2
standing arms upward.**

Stand on soles of No. 2 lying.



Preparatory Exercises



**Stand on hands of No. 2
arms upward.**



Balance Stand left, arm forward, on the shoulder of No. 2 supported by hands of No. 2



**Head Stand on back of No. 2
No. 2 with hands on knees
as a support.**

for two members

Hand Stand on knees of No. 2 supported by hands of No. 2 in a stride stand, half knee bend position.



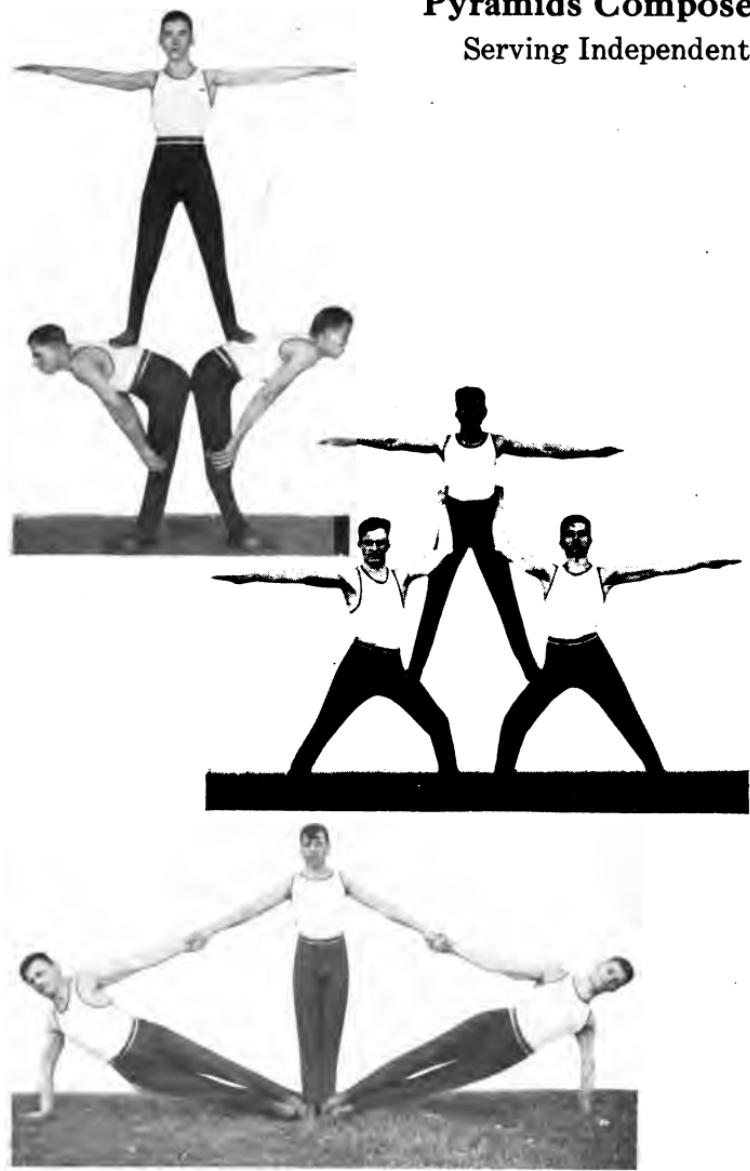
Head Stand back to back, legs lowered to balance (horizontal) position.

Lever with scissor hold on body of No. 2 supported by hands of No. 2 at the ankles.



PYRAMIDS WITHOUT APPARATUS.

Pyramids Composed
Serving Independently



**of three members
or to fill out centers.**



Pyramids Composed of
Serving to fill



**three and four members
out sides.**



Pyramids Composed



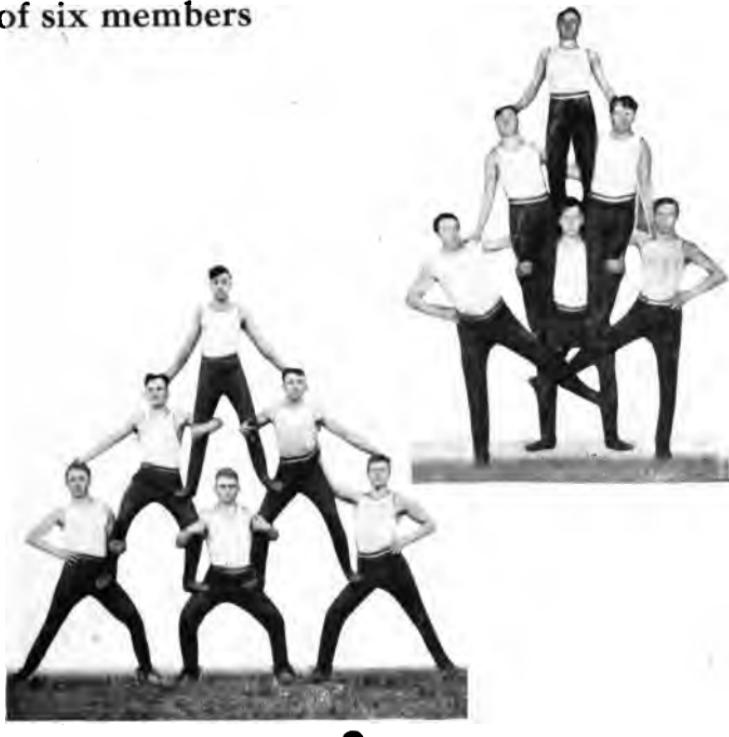
of five members



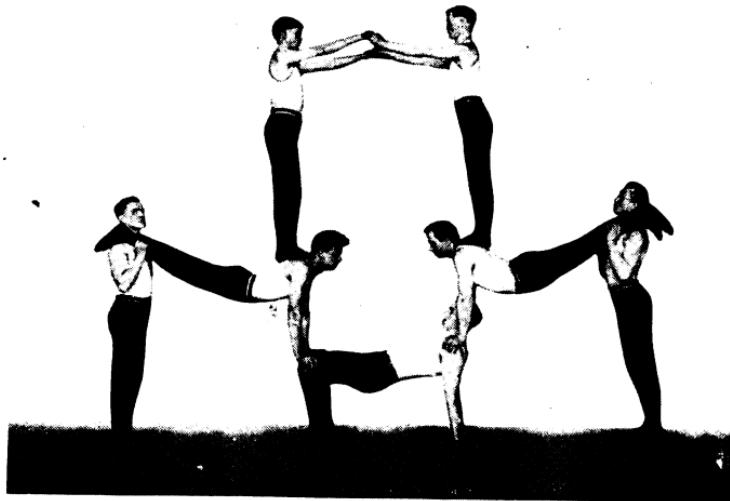
Pyramids Composed



of six members



Pyramids Composed



of seven members



Pyramids Composed



of eight members



Pyramids Composed



of nine and ten members



CONICAL AND WALKING PYRAMIDS

Conical



Pyramids



Walking

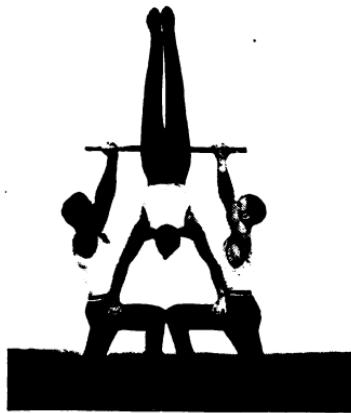


Pyramids



PYRAMIDS WITH APPARATUS.

Pyramids with



Short Wands



Pyramids with



Short Wands

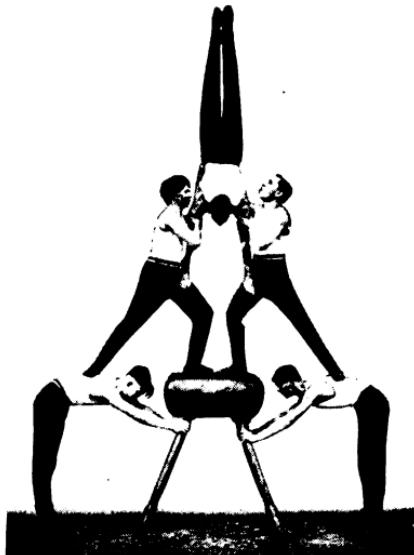


PYRAMIDS ON APPARATUS.

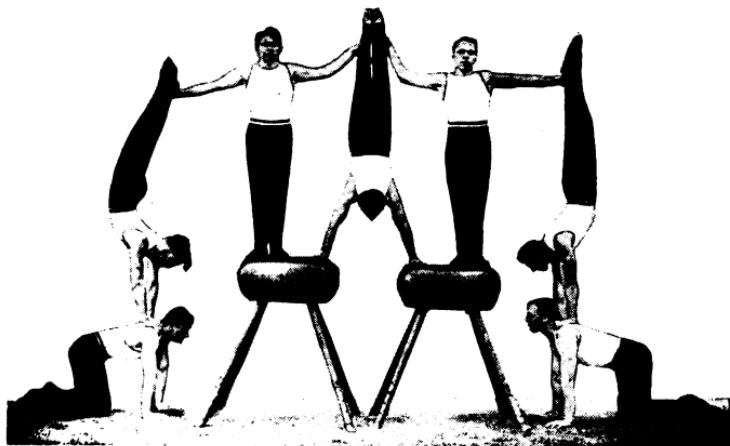
Pyramids



on Buck



Pyramids on one



and two Bucks



Pyramids on



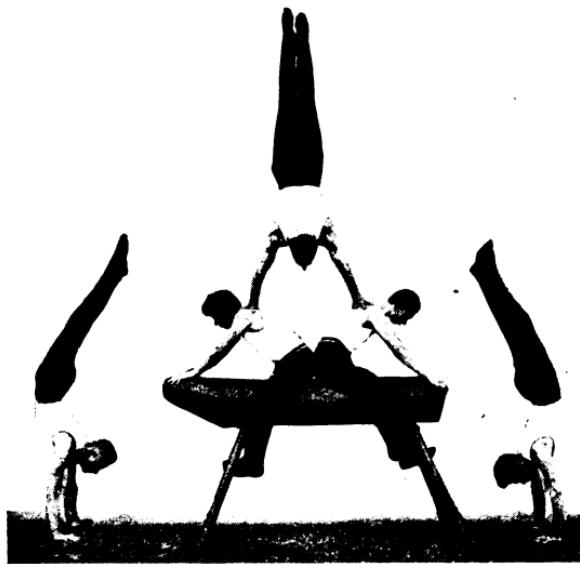
Side Horse



Pyramids on



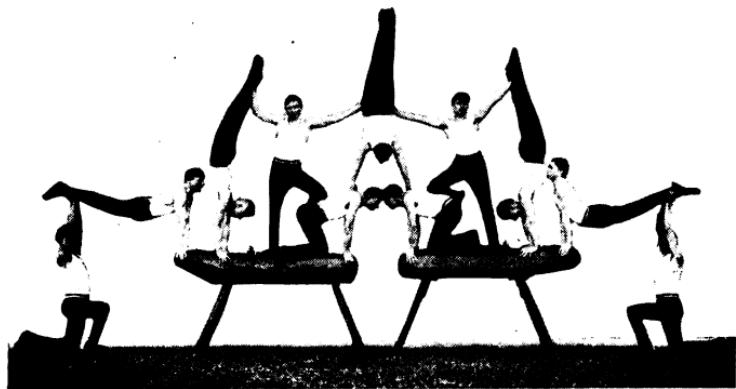
Side Horse



Pyramids on two



Side Horses



Pyramids on two



Side Horses



Pyramids



on Chairs



Pyramids



on Chairs



Pyramids



on Chairs



Pyramids



on Chairs



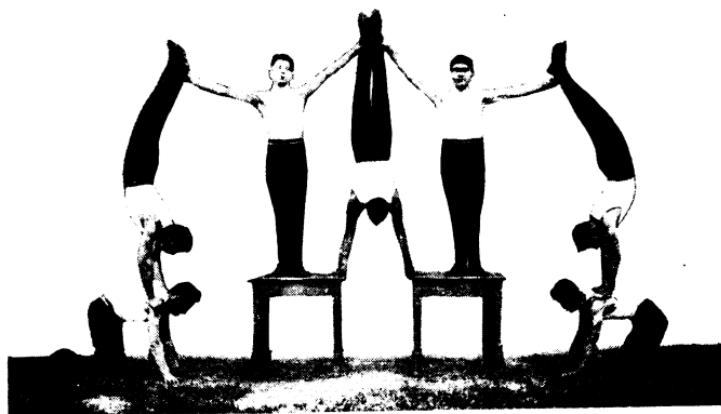
Pyramids



on Chairs



Pyramids on one, two



and three Tables



Pyramids on Combined



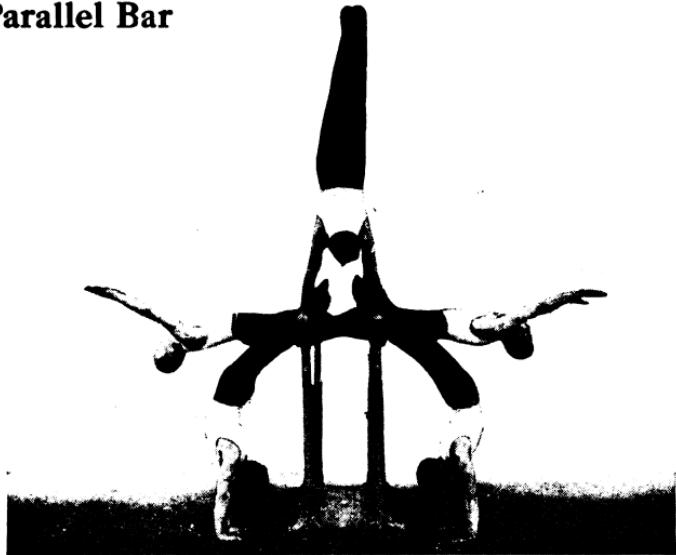
Tables and Chairs



Pyramids on the end



of Parallel Bar



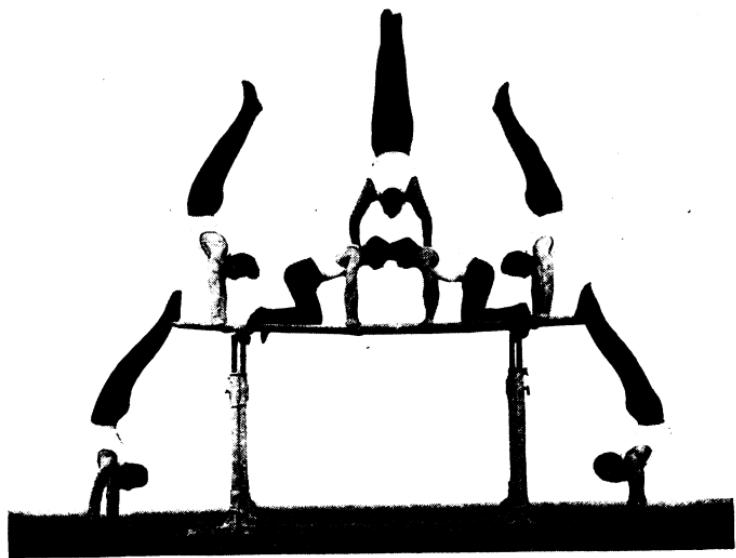
Pyramids on



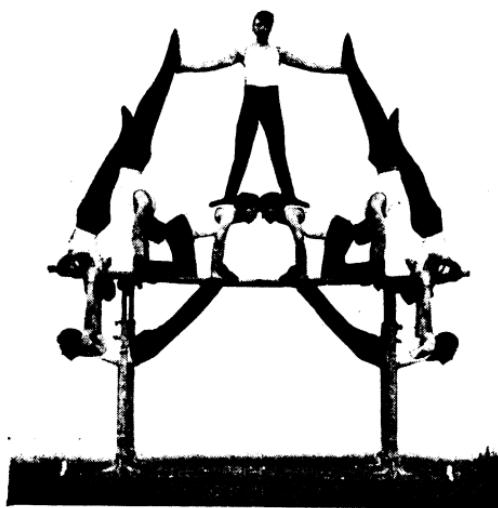
Parallel Bar



Pyramids on



Parallel Bar



Pyramids



Pole Ladders



THE ATHLETIC
ACADEMY

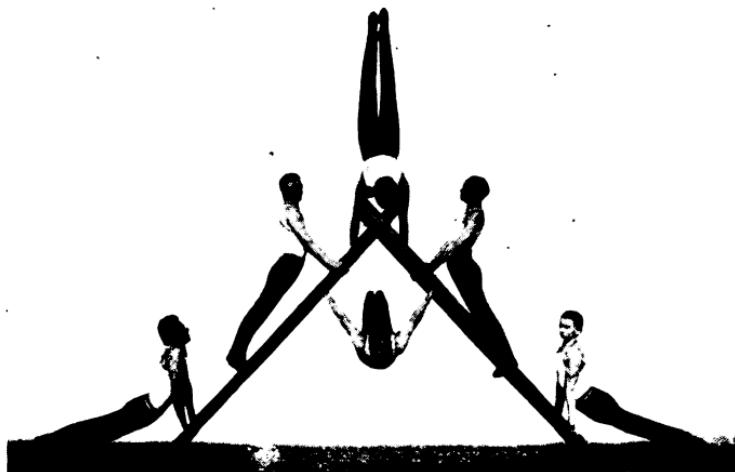
Pyramids on two and



three Movable Ladders



Pyramids on two Ladders



fastened together at the top



Pyramids on two and four Ladders



fastened together at the top



Pyramids on



Balance Boards



Pyramids on



Horizontal Bar





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